

SPRINGFIELD
CONSERVATION
NATURE CENTER



Harbinger

MARCH and APRIL 2005

VOL. 19 NO. 2

Naturescaping is a landscaping technique which emphasizes the use of native plants to provide urban habitat for wildlife and offer an alternative to water- and chemical-dependent lawns.

By incorporating native plants into your home landscape, you can help to improve the environment in your immediate area and reduce yard maintenance.

Native plants have natural drought and disease tolerance, reducing their reliance on supplemental watering or pesticides. Also, they generally don't require the use of fertilizers. But perhaps the most rewarding aspect of gardening with native plants is the huge benefit to wildlife. Native plants and animals were in Missouri long before the first human beings were and they have become adapted to one another. As a result, many special relationships have developed between our native plants and animals. For instance, the Monarch butterfly will only lay its eggs on plants belonging to the milkweed family, a family of plants common throughout the state. In addition, seeing a coneflower is equivalent to hearing a dinner bell for many forms of wildlife. There are several different types of coneflowers ranging from the deep violet blooms of purple coneflower to the drooping yellow

petals of yellow coneflower. What all coneflowers have in common is their ability to attract wildlife. During the blooming season coneflowers attract butterflies, bumblebees, and a host of other nectar- or pollen-seeking insects. However, once the blooms have faded in the fall they continue to attract birds which will come to pluck the seeds from the old flower heads. Given your surroundings, anything from turtles to turkeys can be attracted to your property with the proper use of native plants.

If you'd like to learn more

about native plants, their benefits, and how to use them in your home landscape be sure to

attend the Naturescaping Symposium on April 2, 9am to 4pm. This day-long series of educational programs concerning native plants will run concurrently with a plant sale featuring many hard-to-find native plants.

Naturescaping Symposium Highlights

Featured speaker Don Kurz will present "Wildflowers of Spring" at 11am. Following his program, he will sign copies of his books *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri*, *Trees of Missouri*, and *Ozark Wildflowers*.

Browse the native plant sale from 9am to 4pm featuring Missouri Wildflower Nursery and Hamilton Seeds and Wildflowers.

Pick up free Conservation Department publications on plants and wildlife.

The View From The Bridge

We value everything you take time to tell us. Whether it's a notation made in the comment section of the guest registration book or the responses many of you made on the cards to update your newsletter mailing subscription, I will read it. While visitors often write the obligatory "cool" and "awesome" comments to describe their nature center experience, a few remarks really stand out. Repeatedly, we read comments about how much visitors enjoy the trails, programs, exhibits, and clean facility, but we get just as many complimentary remarks about the nice and helpful staff and volunteers.

Visitors were asked several survey questions and given the opportunity to make comments last summer when we purged the newsletter mailing list. We had 2,053 newsletter recipients from 171 zip codes respond. And, 43.8% of you recorded that you visited the nature center five or more times last year. You rated what you like most about the nature center in the following order: trails, programs, exhibits, special events, and gift shop. Also, you responded that you participated most often in family programs, followed in order by adults only, children (older than preschool), and preschool program offerings. Not surprisingly, programs for teens, while very important, rated in last place. Your comments ranged from requests for more of your favorite program topics to suggestions of adding bathrooms on the trails. Of special note were the comments about the knowledgeable, friendly, service-oriented, and helpful staff and volunteers. Having the kind of staff worthy of these compliments is a tradition at the nature center, and one that we'll continue to strive for in the future.

On that note, I am absolutely delighted to announce that Rudy Martinez, formerly a Naturalist at the center since 2001, has been promoted to fill the vacant Assistant Nature Center Manager position. Rudy's strong organizational skills, supervisory background, and commitment to conservation education will continue to guide him in his new role. For those of you who have enjoyed the myriad of programs Rudy has led in the past, such as the For Adults Only series and the Hiking Club, don't fret. Despite his new duties, which include guiding the volunteer program, Rudy's passion for interpretation will not be thwarted by administrative duties and he will continue to help with these programs on occasion. Under his mentoring, other staff members and volunteers will be trained to take on leadership roles with these programs. And, you can be assured that the tradition will continue of offering great programs and having a staff worthy of praise.

Linda

Linda F. Chorice,
Nature Center Manager

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd>

The Nature Nook

Gift Shop



20%
Off

Missouri

Heritage card discount
does not apply.

Wildflowers

The fifth edition of Denison's classic makes identifying common Missouri wildflowers easy. Its 297 color photographs are arranged by flower color and blooming time. Plant descriptions, including plant characteristics, habitat, range, and name derivations, accompany each photo. The appendix provides descriptions of an additional 163 plants and 71 plant families. Revised 1998.

Discounted price: \$9.60 plus tax.

Temporary Display

March/April

Nature Photography

by Alan O'Neal

Mark your calendar
now to attend ...

Super
Scout
Saturday



Saturday, May 14
10am-4pm

Attention: Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors; Tigers, Wolves, Bears, and Webelos; Camp Fire USA; and Royal Rangers.

Here's another opportunity for the groups listed above to have fun learning while earning nature-oriented badges. Stations set up throughout the building will provide information and/or activities that will satisfy certain requirements for various badges. Mix and match stations to complete as many requirements as you like. Adult supervision is required. Call or stop by the nature center for more information.

Ask The Naturalist

Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we will answer some common questions about natural events.

When do purple martins arrive and when should I put up my houses?

Try to get your martin houses up around March 15. The first male scouts will appear around this time with the females not far behind. When the females arrive, they begin to search for a home and a mate.

When and where can I find morel mushrooms around Springfield?

Morels can be found from February to June, but the peak of morel season in this area is usually in April. Even though a morel hunter will not tell you where their hot spots are, morels can be found in moist woodlands and in river bottoms. Weather conditions that trigger the appearance of morels include unusually warm temperatures for a few days, warm rains, or a few very warm nights.

When should I put up my hummingbird feeders?

April 15 is a good date to put up your feeders. You will begin to see male hummingbirds around this time, but not females. Females follow the males by 8 to 10 days. Most hummingbirds, however, arrive in May.

I found a nest of baby rabbits that have been abandoned. How do I care for them?

Leave baby rabbits where you found them. Mothers nurse them only at dawn and dusk and won't be near them during the day. Although a small rabbit found out of its nest that is fully furred, eyes open, and eating solid foods may look like a baby, it is likely on its own and not dependant on its mother any longer. Baby rabbits grow up quickly and are on their own 2 to 3 weeks after birth.

Thank You

We would like to thank Joseph DuBrul and Brandon Reser for donating natural objects. Thanks also to Mary Johnson and family for the holiday goodies!

Chipping In . . . Sally Inskip



With a busy schedule, recreation sometimes has to sit on the back burner and finding time for it can create unwanted stress. But the value of recreation marks high on some people's list and making time for it is just what Volunteer Naturalist Sally Inskip does. She attends Evangel University as a full-time student, works forty hours a week, is active with her church, and volunteers for the nature center. Yet, she still makes time to do the things she enjoys and cherishes any time spent outside. Her enthusiasm about the outdoors is evident as she takes every opportunity to learn about or to share with someone what she observes in nature.

In 2001, Sally first attended programs at the nature center such as For Adults Only participating in hikes and other outdoor activities. Her interest in the outdoors grew and her willingness to share her knowledge and experiences with others prompted her to become a Volunteer Naturalist for the nature center in 2003. Her outgoing personality helps bring people together and has fostered many new friendships among people she's led with the Hiking Club.

Her adventurous spirit sprouted from all the outdoor activities she's pursued including hiking, caving, canoeing, and fishing. Sally is not one to hold back when it comes to bushwhacking through brush to locate a natural feature or to find her favorite fishing hole (and sometimes to find her way back to her car). When hiking, you'll occasionally find her attention drawn to movement in the leaves, hoping to spot a snake. Her fascination with snakes and desire to learn more about them motivated her to catch a wild, nonvenomous snake for the first time. Hiking ranks near the top of the things she likes to do. Hiking during the winter months is not uncommon but to include wading in waist-deep water during December truly shows her adventurous spirit. This is exactly the type of adventure Sally seeks, does, and enjoys sharing with others.

Once in a while even an adventurous spirit needs a little moral support. While exploring Watkins Cave, she found herself in unfamiliar territory at the entrance of "the squeeze," a small passage filled with ten inches of mud and twelve inches of air space, but she overcame her apprehension and pushed her way through the mud. It's this type of challenging experience that has made her an invaluable volunteer when assisting with the Conservation TEEN Club. Her boundless energy and enthusiasm are tremendous assets when it comes to keeping up with a group of teenagers. They look up to her for advice and encouragement and her outgoing personality makes her an excellent role model.

The next time you see someone hurrying through the parking lot to get to the nature center building, it just might be Sally trying to squeeze in some volunteer time. So, be sure to stop and thank her for chipping in.

Volunteer Milestones

Liz Behle	2,000 Hours	Steve Craig	300 Hours
Alice Dolan	1,500 Hours	Jack Bowers	200 Hours
Art Daniels	500 Hours	Sue Schuble	200 Hours
Joyce Tolliver	500 Hours	Larry Scriven	200 Hours
Shane Thomas	400 Hours	Dana Tideman	200 Hours
Andy Busch	300 Hours	Carol Van Eaton	200 Hours


Naturescaping Symposium

Saturday, April 2

9am-4pm

Call the nature center to
receive a flier listing the
day's activities.

Harbinger



Springfield Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
4600 South Chrisman
Springfield, MO 65804-4931
Phone 417/888-4237
Fax: 417/888-4241
<<http://www.MissouriConservation.org>>

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US Postage Paid
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Permit 274

March Events

REGISTRATION

Call the nature center at **417/888-4237** on or after March 1 to register for March programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

4 Nature And The Arts York, The Improbable Explorer Friday, 7-8:30pm

Captain William Clark of the Corps of Discovery is known for his extraordinary journey west. Less known is the story of York, his slave, who accompanied him. While little written record was left of York, what we do know is that Captains Lewis & Clark might not have been successful without him. His story, while improbable, is true. However, the ending is what may surprise you most. Naturalist James Dixon presents this first-person portrayal of York and describes how his story ends. Ages 15-adult. *Call today to register.*

5 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike Saturday, 9-11am

Enjoy a naturalist-guided hike. Families.



9 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11-11:30am
Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds.

10 Parents As Teachers Storytime Thursday, 9:30, 10:30, or 11:30am

Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a "Nature At Its Best" story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

11 Nature And The Arts Frontier America: History On Canvas Friday, 7-8pm

Kyle Carroll, Historical Artist and reenactor from Maysville, Missouri, provides the final program in the Nature And The Arts series. His detailed oil and acrylic paintings depict the relationship between man and his environment and tell the story of survival on the American frontier. Enjoy the stories behind the paintings from one who has sought the wilderness and experienced wild America firsthand. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

12 Hunter Education Saturday, 8am-5pm and Sunday, 1-4pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. On Saturday, the course will be from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided) and continue on Sunday from 1 to 4pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*



Videos are shown
every Sunday
from 2-3pm.

12 Hiking Club Saturday, 8am-5pm

Explore the hills and scenic overlooks of Paddy Creek Wilderness with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik. Hike is six miles and trail is rated as difficult. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

17 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Spring Thursday, 6-6:45pm

Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0-2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

18 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Spring Friday, 11-11:45am

[Same as March 17]

Otter-Mania Friday, 7-8pm

Special guests Glenn Chambers and his otters return for their final presentation in Springfield before the otters (and Glenn) retire permanently. See hand-raised otters up close, learn about their habits, laugh at their behavior, and hear about the Conservation Department's successful reintroduction of otters to the wild. It's guaranteed to be otter-ly fantastic! Drop by between March 1 to 18 to sign a giant-sized farewell and thank you card to Glenn! Families. Registration required.

19 Discovery Table Spring Is Here! Saturday, 1-4pm

Stop by to see this display and to learn about birds, bugs, blooms, and other things you'll be seeing as spring arrives. We'll also be making fun springtime artwork you can take home.

22 First To The Pacific! Sir Alexander Mackenzie Tuesday, 7-8pm

Although he arrived at the Pacific Ocean over a decade before the Lewis & Clark expedition, few Americans today are aware of the exploits of Scottish-Canadian fur trader Sir Alexander Mackenzie. He not only traveled to the Pacific, but also to the Arctic Ocean using only canoes. His journals provided the inspiration for President Thomas Jefferson to authorize the voyage of the Corps of Discovery, as well as detailed information for the fur trade industry concerning the natural resources along the route of his voyage. Todd Wilkinson, Librarian and adjunct history instructor at Ozarks Technical Community College, shares Mackenzie's adventures and his contributions to history. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

26 Conservation TEEN Club Roaring River State Park Saturday, 9am-5pm

Roaring River State Park is home to one of the largest springs in Missouri and to an abundance of wildlife. We'll hike the scenic terrain of the park and visit the trout hatchery and nature center. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

Donation Requested:

We need a violin to display in a Missouri Symbols exhibit. If you have an old, nonworking one you can donate permanently, please let us know.

26 For Adults Only Aquatic Investigation Saturday, 10am-Noon

Learn how to determine the health of a body of water by identifying the aquatic insects, animals, and plants that live and grow there. We'll see firsthand how nature fights back to rid itself of impurities as we wrap up with a walk along Galloway Creek. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

Woodcarving Demonstration Saturday, 10am-4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the "wood-be" carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces.

The Art Of Woodcarving Saturday, 10-11am

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

29 Conservation Kids' Club Salamander Secrets Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

From tiny, delicate newts to monstrous-looking hellbenders that reach lengths of up to two feet, many types of salamanders live in Missouri. Several, like the hellbender, are decreasing in numbers due to human activity. Learn about the lives of these secretive and silent creatures and how you can help protect the salamanders that call Missouri home. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

31 Spring Turkey Hunting Seminar Thursday, 7-8pm

Spring turkey season is almost here. Practice your turkey calling, learn about the youth spring turkey hunting season, and take home some tips on how to be safe and successful in the woods this spring. Ages 6-adult. Registration required.

Little Acorns

Little Acorns programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Egg-squisite Eggs

Bring your little ones and learn egg-sactly how and why animals begin their lives in these wonderful little packages. Ages 3-6.

Registration begins February 15 for the March 5 programs.

Saturday, March 5, 11am or 1pm
Wednesday, March 16, 1pm

Salamander Slide

Meet the salamander family! We'll investigate some of their special features and find out why salamanders aren't lizards.

Friday, March 11, 11am or 1pm
Saturday, March 12, 11am

Dig It!

Your mom makes you wash it off; you're not allowed to eat it; and it's alive. What is it? Dirt! Join us as we explore the soil (*aka* dirt) to discover what tiny creatures call it home.

Friday, March 25, 10am, 1pm, or 3pm

April Events

REGISTRATION

Call the nature center at **417/888-4237** on or after April 1 to register for April programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

2 Naturescaping Symposium and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, 9am-4pm

Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. There will be a series of guest speakers espousing the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale featuring many native plants that are drought resistant and beneficial to wildlife. Call to receive a flier listing the day's activities.

Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9-11am

Enjoy a naturalist-guided hike. Families.



9 Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

Saturday, 10am-4pm

Stop by anytime to watch members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

10 Hiking Club

Sunday, 1-9pm

Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam leads this six-mile hike at Bennett Spring State Park. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Trail is rated as moderate to difficult. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

13 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11-11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds.

15 Hunter Education

Friday, 6-9pm and Saturday, 8am-5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

17 Primitive Skills Series Useful Plant Hike

Sunday, 1-3pm

Plants have always been important to humans. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explain the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.



Videos are shown every Sunday from 2-3pm.

EARTH DAY 2005 WORK PROJECTS

Registration for work projects begins April 1.

April 16 Saturday 8am-4pm Conservation Crew

Help us give a little back to the community by visiting a few local conservation area fishing accesses to clean up trash. Lunch and drinks will be provided. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18-adult.

9am-Noon Garden Group

Bring gloves and garden tools to help spruce up the entrance flower bed. Ages 10-adult.

9am-Noon Trail Chippers

Help woodchip a portion of our trail. Ages 7-adult. Bring gloves.

10-11:30am Little Acorn Chippers

Help woodchip the Wildlife Viewing Area. Bring your bucket, gloves, and your favorite Big Person. Ages 3-6.

Adult supervision required for all projects.

April 23 Saturday 9am-Noon Conservation TEEN Club: Canoe Crew Cleanup

We'll celebrate Earth Day with a community service project. Come and enjoy a morning on the water while cleaning the nature center shoreline using canoes. Ages 12-17.

April 16 Saturday, 1-4pm Branson/Tri-Lakes Earth Day Event

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery, Branson

If you have recycling and environmental questions, bring them! Organizations throughout the community will be providing information on their services and ideas. Individuals and families welcome. Groups, please register. For more information or to register, call the Hatchery at 417/334-4865, ext. 0.

National Wildlife Week April 17-23



"Explore Nature In Your Neighborhood"

Stop by anytime between 2 and 5pm and learn more about nature in your neighborhood

17 Sunday - Amphibians

See toads, frogs, and salamanders up close and create some amphibian artwork to take home.

18 Monday - Reptiles

These scaly creatures aren't scary once you learn about them. See them up close and create a creature craft.

19 Tuesday - Trees

Stop by to make a tree ID book.

20 Wednesday - Fish

Fill up with fascinating facts and catch a paper fish to decorate.

21 Thursday - Crawdads

Look at live crayfish and make your own mudbug.

22 Friday - Ants

View an ant farm and create some ant artwork.

23 Saturday - Bees

See live bees and learn about their busy lives.

19 At The Nest A Field Photographer's Tales Tuesday, 7-8pm

Cosponsored by the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society, Volunteer Naturalist and Nature Photographer Bob Ball presents a program on nesting bird behavior. See photos of nesting birds in action and hear about the sometimes comic, occasionally tragic, but always entertaining behavior of a variety of birds as they go about their daily business of nesting, food gathering, and raising young. Ages 6-adult. Registration required.

22 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

Friday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Big people, enjoy nature with your younger generation, children ages 0-2, on this special walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

Earth Day Video

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

Friday, 4-4:30pm or 4:30-5pm

Elementary-age kids, with an adult, are invited to come for an afternoon Earth Day movie. *The Lorax* is a conservation classic with a timeless message for all.

24 Summer Hummers Sunday, 5-6:30pm

Believe it or not, hummingbirds are returning to the Ozarks. Join hummingbird bander Sarah Driver as she shares information and anecdotes about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

26 Conservation Kids' Club Caves Are Cool!

Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

Travel on an adventure of the mind as we go "underground" to learn about the mysterious world of caves. On this journey, you'll learn how caves form and discover some of the fascinating animals that are adapted to life in the dark. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

Little Acorns

Little Acorns programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Worm Squirm

Worms squiggle and wiggle and crawl through the dirt. They eat dead plants and make soil for the earth! Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan and learn more about these underground creatures.

Friday, April 8, 11am or 1pm

Skunk Scurry

There's more to a skunk than its smell. "Sniff out" some amazing skunk facts, learn a pre-spray skunk "dance," and take home a craft that won't "stink."

Thursday, April 14, 11am or 1pm

Hooray For Hummingbirds

Preschoolers, give a cheer to welcome the ruby-throated hummingbirds back as they return to the Ozarks. Catch the excitement of learning about these tiny jewels of the bird world.

**Friday, April 29, 1pm
Saturday, April 30, 11am or 1pm**